

# One Minnesota Budget



## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES PROPOSAL

Our state depends on the success of Minnesota children, youth, and families. Although Minnesota is ranked as a top state to live and work, this is not yet true for every Minnesotan. Our systems have not led to equitable outcomes for our children, and today race, zip code, and income are too often determinants of opportunity. We must embrace opportunities to think differently and to improve the effectiveness of service delivery in our current systems for children and families who need them most.

The Walz-Flanagan Administration recommends creating a Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) that reimagines our state government structures to elevate child, youth, and family priorities and funding needs by providing focused leadership in our executive branch and with the legislature. The work will move us closer to ensuring every child has a safe place to call home, no child goes hungry, and youth have the resources and supports to succeed inside and outside of the classroom. This new agency will bring together holistic supports for families, including core programs from early childhood through youth.

The core programs considered to move into the new agency include:

- Child care and early learning programs
- Child Support, Child Safety and Permanency, and other family-focused community programs
- Economic support and food assistance programs
- Youth opportunity and older youth investments

### PROPOSAL

The 2023 Walz-Flanagan Budget proposes to the legislature a process for transitioning to the new agency and obtaining authority and resources to support the creation, alignment, and launch of a two-year process of moving core child, youth, and family support divisions to a new agency that would begin July 2024. The proposed department would consist of an estimated 650 staff currently supporting the core services at existing agencies who move to DCYF with an estimated budget for core services to be in excess of \$3 billion.

## IMPACT

The creation of DCYF means a recognizable public face and a clear front-door in the state's quest to prioritize children. It will improve communication outlets focused on youth and families, maximize and coordinate funding, align outcomes and convene leadership to improve access to services for children, youth, and families.



### Early Childhood Programs

The proposed department will consolidate early childhood programs – including child care assistance, early learning scholarships, mixed delivery pre-K, and other child care functions like licensing – to streamline and better coordinate child care and early learning services and improve outcomes for children, families, and the early childhood workforce. Building off recent early childhood system coordination successes, the creation of DCYF will lead to:

- Improved coordination of child care and early learning provider registration, communication, payment, and ongoing regulatory requirements;
- Aligned administration that allows for centralized funding prioritization, including building reimbursement methodologies for child care to better support that critical sector; and
- A common application and entry point for families to apply for and be referred to early childhood programs and services.



### Youth Investment

The proposed department will bring together programs for children and youth from intentional prevention to downstream services, creating space for investment in students outside of the classroom and in their community. The agency will lead to:

- Focused investments and out-of-school programs (focusing upstream rather than on downstream public safety and corrections as the only strategies);
- Leadership and aligned outcome measures focused on youth needs across our state systems; and
- Coordination across child welfare, mental health, and detention systems).



### Family Well-Being Programs

The proposed department will elevate in leadership and structure a safety net of programs available to families that keep our Minnesota neighbors safe, healthy, fed and better able to reach their full potential by making sure:

- Economic and food assistance programs remain top priorities so every family and child have easy access to opportunities that are culturally relevant and help them learn, grow and thrive;
- Implementation of unified statewide networks of community resource centers to promote family and community well-being; and
- Our government follows research that points to the importance of a multi-generation approach, focusing services and opportunities for adults who play key roles in the lives of children as the most meaningful, equitable impact.

*Governance is important but does not replace resources and coordination. This budget proposes meaningful investments in the programs that serve children and continues to prioritize coordination across other important child and youth programs.*